

# THE GULL

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Golden Gate Audubon Society

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## EVOLUTIONARY ARCHITECTURE: NATURAL ORGANISMS AND STRUCTURES AS BASIS FOR DESIGN

Join architect, designer and planner Eugene Tsui for this truly innovative program Thursday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the Northbrae Community Church, 942 The Alameda in Berkeley. Tsui studies "animal architecture"—the structural and behavioral adaptations in nature—and uses these concepts and principles to design more energy efficient and structurally superior man-made structures. Simply put, he looks at how animals are built or build things to take advantage of their natural environment and incorporates them into his designs.

Tsui has found that in most cases nature knows best, and he will give examples at many different levels of the animal world...mammals, reptiles, insects and, of course, birds. For example, African termites construct a 15-foot high wedge-shaped nest that is

*(continued on next page)*

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE AUDUBON SOCIETY?

That's probably a good basis to invite someone you know to join this month. Was it going on a field trip? Invite someone! Was it a film showing or a meeting? Bring a likely guest. Was it because someone asked you? Try it on a friend, a relative or a co-worker. Was it because an action of GGAS pleased you? Tell others what we are achieving. Was it a birding class GGAS sponsored? Encourage enrolling. Was it the Rare Bird Alert? Spread the word. Was it a gift membership? Can you return the favor with a gift to someone you know?

Audubon chapters always need new members. When the members recruit them the chapter benefits financially. Normally, GGAS receives \$5.50 as its share of annual dues, but for members we sign up initially, we receive \$15 of first year's dues, almost three times our usual share. With that in mind, can you introduce someone to Audubon this month? An application form is on the insert.

### IN THIS ISSUE

BIRDATHON ★ ANNUAL ELECTION ★ SEED SALE  
SUNSET CRUISE ★ ART AUCTION ★ BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

**MEETING***(continued)*

oriented in a south-north direction to minimize the intensity of the sun. This orientation helps control the temperature and humidity of the structure. Tsui finds significance in the fact that the Bower Bird uses an aesthetic structure to attract a mate, something very rare in nature.

Tsui will discuss how these natural designs are advantageous in maximizing energy efficiency and conserving materials, and how we could make our structures more efficient if we paid more attention to nature. He will also explain why this connection between nature and human architecture needs to be practiced more today, and why it hasn't been done more.

Our speaker is the director of Tsui Design and Research, which develops and promotes his bold and innovative vision. Dr. Tsui holds four professional degrees in architecture and has been teaching and exhibiting his work since 1976.

—JOELLE BUFFA

**SEED SALE**

A last chance to stock up on GGAS' best quality bird seed until September is coming at the end of April. The order form is to be found on the insert sheet. Your order, with your check payable to GGAS, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope should be mailed to arrive by

April 22. Pick up will be 3-6 p.m. on Friday, April 30 and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 1, at the GGAS office in Berkeley.

**NOMINATIONS**

The nominating committee composed of Ann Dewart, Barbara Rivenes and Steven Margolin reported at the February meeting of the board of directors a slate of officers for a one year term, and directors for the three year terms beginning June 1, as well as a one year Director at Large. (The term of the office of president is two years, and will end May 30, 1994.)

All present officers agreed to serve an additional term, and are nominated. The directors whose terms are up are, West Bay: Alan Hopkins and East Bay: David Rice. They also agreed to continue for another term.

Committees will be reorganized in June, following the election and annual meeting. Members are cordially invited to become involved in the Conservation Committee, or other committees where they feel they can serve. Don't wait to be asked. Come forward.

The ballot is on the insert. To be counted it must be received at the GGAS office by May 15.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON Magazine* and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$20 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 15, 1917,  
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

**The Gull deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.**

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## FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

**Saturday, April 10**—Bothe-Napa Valley State Park. Leader: Gene Hull (510/525-6893). For details, see *The GULL* for March.

**Sunday, April 11**—Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Traditional Easter walk. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. at 43rd Ave. and Fulton St. near North Lake (Chain of Lakes) for a walk around the various lakes in the vicinity. There is a variety of waterfowl and songbirds to be seen and at least two species of hummingbirds. After the walk we will have a champagne brunch (\$15) at nearby Thiggy's Restaurant in Lincoln Park. (Reservations not required.) Leader: Betty Short (415-921-3020, work phone).

**Wednesday, April 14**—Mini-trip to Sunol Regional Park. For details, see *The GULL* for March.

**Saturday, April 17**—Briones Regional Park. For this one-half day trip meet in the park at 9 a.m. Take Hwy. 24 and exit on the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and go about 4.5 miles to Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Rd.).

Or, from Berkeley area, cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue across San Pablo Dam Rd. onto Bear Creek Rd. 4.5 miles to the park.

Meet in the first parking area on the left. We will be looking for resident birds and early migrants. Leader: David George (510/339-0765). \$ (✓)

**Saturday, April 17**—Fifth Annual Point Reyes National Seashore All-day Spring Birding Blitz. (Joint activity: GGAS/Nat. Park Service.) Meet at 8 a.m. at Five Brooks Trail-head parking lot, approximately 3.5 miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1. We will bird Five Brooks Pond Area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock and

Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley for a multi-habitat trip. Bring water, food, and layer clothes for variable weather. Leader: Leon Abrams (415-453-9980, work) (510-843-4107, home). (✓)

**Saturday, April 24**—Join the official GGAS Birdathon field trip with Dan Murphy for a great day of birding on the San Francisco Peninsula. In birding parlance m.o.b. refers to many observers, and this is your chance to be one of the many birders who build a day list of a hundred or more species on Birdathon day. We'll visit many of the Peninsula's greatest birding spots, get together with friends, finish the day with dinner at Celia's, and help GGAS in its major annual fundraiser. Did we mention your pledge per species?

Yes, your pledge per species is the way we raise money. Ask friends to pledge for each species we see. Remember that ten pledges of a dime each will earn \$1 per bird. Of course you are welcome to join us for any pledge of a dime or more per bird. (see insert, also p. 64).

Meet at 7 a.m. at the parking lot up the hill from the Cliff House at the intersection of Merri Way and Great Highway in San Francisco. From there we will caravan to Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced, the San Francisco Watershed, Mountain View and other spots on the Peninsula. We have seen over 100 species on previous Birdathons. We plan to stop for dinner around 7 p.m.

Wear layered clothing so you will be comfortable along the coast where it may be foggy and windy, or in the interior where it may be quite warm. Sun screen, lunch and liquids are necessary as well.

If you plan to join us for dinner at Celia's Mexican Restaurant please call Dan Murphy, 564-0074, during the week prior to the bird-a-thon, otherwise get all your friends to pledge for the birdathon and I'll see you at 7 on April 24.

**Sunday, April 25**—Mines Rd., Livermore. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Nob Hill Shopping Center. Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. From there we will caravan on mountain roads to Patterson. Bring food and liquids. We can expect to see Northern Orioles, Lewis' Woodpeckers, and Phainopeplas in this habitat. Roadrunners and Wild Turkeys have also been seen on this trip. Those who want to, are invited to continue with the group until dark. Leader: Art Edwards (510-447-3720). (✓)

**Sunday, May 2**—Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will make a short drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd. Bring a lunch and liquids for a six mile hike.

We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird in brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Hiking boots advisable. The trip will end at 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (510-376-8945). (✓)

**Saturday, May 8**—Birding by Ear in Briones Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Take Hwy. 24 east and exit on the Orinda turnoff, then turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to bear Creek Rd. Turn right and drive about 4.5 miles to the

Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Rd.) Or, from Berkeley area—cross through Tilden Regional park on Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue across San Pablo Dam Rd. onto Bear Creek Rd.

Meet in the parking area on the left just beyond the fee booth in Briones Regional park. Be prepared to hike five miles with lunch and liquids through hilly terrain. Be sure to bring a hat or sunscreen. We will study the songs and calls of common breeding birds of the East Bay. Leader: Dave Cornman. (510-825-2106). \$ (✓)

**Saturday, May 8**—Bouverie Audubon Preserve (near Glen Ellen). This 400 acre preserve is known for its flowering plants (over 350 species) as well as 100 bird species.

This trip is by reservation only. Reservations must be received (mail or telephone) by April 30. Address:

Bouverie Audubon Preserve  
P.O. Box 1195  
Glen Ellen, CA 95442

**Telephone:** 707/938-4554

Directions and information about meeting time and place will be mailed to participants.

**Wednesday, May 12**—Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park. Meet at the park at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 24 east and exit on the Orinda turnoff, then turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and drive about 4.5 miles to the Briones Regional Park entrance on the right.

We should see Northern Orioles, Lark Sparrows, Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lazuli Buntings. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510-351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

#### Plan Ahead:

**Friday-Sunday, June 4-6**—Yosemite Nat. Park. Birding by Ear. Leader: Dave Cornman.

**Saturday-Sunday, June 19-20—**  
Yuba Pass. Leader: Peter Allen.

**Friday-Sunday, June 25-27—**Lassen Volcanic Nat. Park. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy.

For details on above trips—see future issues of *The GULL*.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

**Problems:** If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (510-524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## A SUNSET TRIP ON THE BAY ON AUDUBON'S BIRTHDAY

Through the generosity of Ron Storrow-Patterson, owner of the Dolphin Charters Company, the Delphinus will take a party of thirty Golden Gate Audubon members on a sunset cruise on the Bay. Will you join us, **Monday, April 26**, at 7 p.m.?

Aboard the Delphinus we will cruise along our Christmas Count route into the Oakland Estuary. We expect to see lots of birds and experience the beauties of the sunset and the skyline. Food and drink will be provided for a festive occasion. All the proceeds of this event will go to support GGAS conservation, education and field trip activities. The cost of the trip will be \$49 per person, which includes food and drink. If you are interested in coming on this delightful trip send a check made payable to GGAS to the office at 2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite G, Berkeley CA 94702. If you'd like more information, call us at (510) 843-2222.

## FEBRUARY OBSERVATIONS

Alameda County is about to embark on a 5-year breeding bird atlas project. Luckily, a number of our neighboring counties have already gone this route so there are ample guidelines and precedent to follow since it is a project of some immensity. The county is divided into a grid of 5-kilometer-square blocks which are then surveyed by volunteers who attempt to confirm the breeding status of all species of birds that are observed within each block. Contrary to the notions of many, this isn't a project to count all of the birds during the breeding season, or even to count all of the breeding birds; the object is to **confirm**, using a hierarchy of generally accepted criteria, the breeding of each observed species in each block and forever after, for the duration of the atlas project at least, that species no longer need be considered in that block. Find a junco carrying food to vociferously-hungry young in your block and you can forget about juncos for the next five years and move on to Rufous-sided Towhees.

The project requires extraordinary hours of volunteer manpower, and not just in censusing blocks. For instance, part of the preparatory work involves deciding, based on habitat as well as historical nesting records, what species are likely to breed in each block, a task that requires intimate and detailed knowledge of a large and diverse area (Alameda County has 102 blocks) on the part of the person doing it (Howard Cogswell, in this case). That list provides the standard against which results are measured; the hope is to confirm 50 to 60% of the expected breeding species in each block.

Apart from the wealth of data which

is accumulated, one of the nicest aspects of the breeding bird atlas is the way it affects the bird-watching style of the atlasers. No longer is it possible to make a pass through a stretch of habitat and tick off everything that speaks or moves; one must stop and watch the activities of individual birds and assess the significance of patterns of behavior. It is a slower, more thoughtful way of approaching birds in the wild and ultimately quite pleasurable, I think. It certainly adds another dimension to an already multi-dimensional activity.

\* \* \*

February is not the doldrums of the birding year, but it does leave one feeling as though poised on a precipice...something is about to happen. Winter is getting on, but it isn't quite spring. The robins and mockingbirds are just beginning to sing as are Bewick's Wrens; Allen's Hummingbirds are back, and Anna's are sitting on nests, perhaps raising young. And Brant are heading north. So too when last seen was the **Yellow-billed Loon** which was reported from Rodeo Beach on the 24th (CLF). If you abide by the adage that you have to suffer to see birds at sea, then good weather plagued a pelagic trip out of Bodega Bay on the 27th when participants had to "make do" with moderate numbers of Sooty, Short-tailed and Pink-footed Shearwaters, Black-footed Albatrosses, Northern Fulmars, Pomerine Jaegers, Rhinoceros Auklets and hordes of Black-legged Kittiwakes, hardly an exercise in deprivation (JM). Three Blackvented Shearwaters were seen off Pescadero on the 2nd (PJM).

There was some excitement on the 6th and 7th when six Trumpeter Swans with green collars and yellow left wings were found near Butte City (BED). This was not the latest fashion statement

from swandom; rather these were wanderers from an introduced Oregon population and marked in a way that ensured that no one mistook them for that which they were not. Which made the three unmarked **Trumpeter Swans** at Lake Almanor on the 15th that much more notable (JTr). The male and female Tufted Ducks remained in San Francisco (mob); two more were at the Consumnes Preserve on the 14th (fide DGY); and a female was at Foster City from the 15th to the 25th (NCo, mob). The **King Eider** was last reported from Humboldt Bay on the 16th (mob); on the 21st one was spotted off Trinidad leading to not-unwarranted speculation about the movement of the Humboldt Bay bird (ER fide RS).

On the 28th, a migrating adult Broad-winged Hawk flew over Brisbane (ASH). Bald Eagles are not unknown in this part of the state in the winter; certainly the few concentrations are highly touted—boat rides on Lake San Antonio, ranger walks along Cache Creek—but the unexpected individual is always a thrill. On the 7th, a white-headed, white-tailed adult rose up from the Merced NWR, cutting a dark and mighty swath, and putting the sizable flocks of Snow Geese to noisy flight again and again (LLu). There were other reports of Bald Eagle from the same area: Santa Fe Grade on the 1st and 6th (JMR, JsC) and Merced on March 2 (DGr)—maybe the same individual, maybe not. And on the 28th, there were two individuals at Lake Hennessey in Napa County (RS). Northern Saw-whet Owls are not uncommon, but they are uncommonly seen. Frustrated lookers are always advised with unsought solicitude to find a day-roost; advice that is nearly always followed with a recounting of the wonderful views that

were available when one owl took up long-term residence in a hole at Sunol. Patience was rewarded when a roosting Saw-whet was found in the trees at the Point Reyes Lighthouse on the 3rd (JuH, mob) and still remained at the end of the month. It was not always easy to find, making it all the better for those who subscribe to the "no pain/no gain" philosophy; it was also seen by an incredible number of people who had never heard of, let alone looked for, a Saw-whet Owl.

Seventeen Lesser Golden Plovers remained at Point Reyes (mob) while three were reported from the Lodi Sewer Ponds (DGY). Mountain Plovers along Panoche Valley Rd. were down to thirty from a high of 630 in December (mob); there were 135 at Knights Landing in Yolo County on the 27th (TCo). The Rock Sandpiper continued to be seen at Princeton Harbor (mob); another was reported from Humboldt Bay (DSa, RAR). The **Laughing Gull** continued to attend the daily duck and coot feedings at Lake Mendocino (mob); and Glaucous Gulls, including up to five at the mouth of Walker Creek (RS), bordered on plentiful. There was a banded Black Skimmer at Princeton Harbor on the 20th (DW).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported from San Mateo (mob), Nicasio (KH), and Lake County (RS); and a Williamson's Sapsucker was found in the Berkeley Hills (KSw, mob). Eastern Phoebes continued to be seen in Livermore (DPo); and in Davis (mob), where there was also an Ash-throated Flycatcher (JMHu, EDG); another Eastern Phoebe was in Pescadero on the 4th (MLR). There was a Pinyon Jay in El Granada on the 10th (BS fide RSTh). Five Townsend's Solitaires were at the summit of Mt. St. Helena on the 15th (BDP), a fitting reward for a hefty climb. Sage

Thrashers were reported from Alameda (mob); Little Panoche Rd. (GFi, JMR, JSC); and Merced (DGr). The Northern Shrike in Panoche Valley continued to be seen (mob).

The **Blue-winged Warbler** continued to cause a stir in Ferndale, along with a Palm Warbler and American Tree Sparrow (mob); Palm Warbler reports also came from Point Reyes (RS, FGB) and San Francisco (JSC). The Point Reyes bird was a "yellow" Palm Warbler, the eastern race which is quite rare out here (one bird out of every 150 to 200 that we get). The American Redstart remained in Golden Gate Park (mob). A Western Tanager in San Francisco on the 27th was unseasonal (MLR).

The Clay-colored Sparrow was still being seen in Half Moon Bay (DPo, JM, RF, MiF); there were two Grasshopper Sparrows in Merced on March 2 (DGr); and the Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Palo Alto appeared again at high tide (NiL, AME, DSa). Moderate numbers of White-throated Sparrows continue to be reported. There were three Red Crossbills in El Granada (BS fide RSTh) and an Evening Grosbeak in Point Reyes Station (JD).

**OBSERVERS:** Florence G. Bennett, Josiah Clark, N. Coiro, Terry Colborn, J. Scott Cox, Bruce E. Deuel, Al Dimartini, Jack Dineen, Alan M. Eisner, Carter L. Faust, Mike Feighner, George Finger, R. Freeman, Dan Gray, Edward D. Greaves, Judy Hansell, Keith Hansen, Alan S. Hopkins, Joan M. Humprhey, Nick Lethaby, Leslie Lieurance, Peter J. Metropulos, Joe Morlan, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Dave Powell, Jean M. Richmond, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary Louise Rosegay, Ruth A Rudesill, Daan Sandee, Barry Sauppe, Rich Stallcup, Kirk Swenson, Ronald S. Thorne, John Trochet, Debra Witter, David G. Yee. Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Rare Bird Alert.

—ANN DEWART

## BIRDATHON APRIL 23 & 24

Resident birds will be singing and on territory, spring migration will be peeking, a few vagrants will even be passing through. That can only mean it's Birdathon time again. Help GGAS raise funds to continue to preserve Mono Lake, create your own team, join with Murphy's M.O.B. (the official field trip of the Birdathon), or pledge a generous tax deductible amount to the team of your choice.

The Birdathon is fun and a simple way to raise funds for the very important causes supported by the Golden Gate Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society. It goes like this. You pledge the amount you wish per bird seen by the team of your choice. On birdathon day the team hits the field bright and early (or dark and earlier), and birds until they drop (or until shortly before the time for their reservations at the restaurant of their choice). Within about a week you should receive a note from the person or team you pledged telling you how much you owe. On that very day drop a check in the mail to GGAS and we'll take it from there.

Since we can designate how National Audubon will use money generated through our efforts we have informed them that our 50% contribution should help defray their expenses in helping to preserve Mono Lake. The 50% designated for GGAS use will go to the Mono Lake Committee to help continue their work. Remember Mono Lake may be this continent's oldest lake. It is a vital migratory link on the east side of the Sierra and it is a critical breeding habitat for California Gull among others.

Photocopy or clip the coupon on the insert in this issue of *The GULL* and

return it to GGAS with your pledge today. We hope to raise \$10,000 for Mono Lake, but we can't do it without your help.

The teams and leaders announced at press time are:

**Bodega Bay Bushtwits**—Nancy Conzett

**Feignopeddlers**—David Rice, Paul and Helen Green

**Huffing Puffins**—Nicki and Tom Spillane

**In the Outer Hebrides**—Lina Prairie and Neil Whitehouse (Pledge a lot, they'll have a short list that far north.)

**Loon-a-ticks**—Alan Hopkins

**Murphy's Mob**—Dan Murphy and the official GGAS Birdathon field trip.

**Not-So-Oldsquaws**—Ann Dewart

**Las Pajaro-thoners**—Pat Gannon

**So-What-Owls**—Steve and Rene Margolin—walking from Tilden to the Bay.

**The Urban Tyrants**—Ivan Samuels

**The Wandering Tattlers**—Rosalyn Bazuto

## VOLUNTEERS: BANK SWALLOW MONITORING

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area is planning a monitoring project at the Bank Swallow colony at Fort Funston in San Francisco. The object of the project is to collect baseline information about our area's last surviving major Bank Swallow colony. Volunteers are needed to work through the breeding season—April through mid-July. Volunteers will monitor the colony and record data weekly for about three hours per session. If you can help, weekdays or weekends, please call Mary Petrilli or Heather Brophy at (415) 556-8371.

## ALAMEDA COUNTY BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Golden Gate and Ohlone Audubon Societies have joined together to atlas the breeding birds of Alameda County in the period 1993 through 1997 under the sponsorship of Coyote Creek Riparian Station. What this means is that we want to publish an accurate account of the distribution of all birds breeding in Alameda County during this period. Other secondary objectives include gathering nest data to share with Cornell University North American Nest-Record Card Program, estimating bird abundance, and surveying historical breeding records. The published atlas will include a county map for each breeding species showing its distribution and associated data important to that species within the county. This kind of information will provide baseline data useful in assessing population changes and the health of our bird life in future years.

In order to accomplish this task in some reasonable fashion, we have used standard 5km UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) blocks. Alameda County has about 64 whole and 38 partial blocks. The county has been divided into 7 sectors, leaders of the sectors have recruited atlasers to cover each of the blocks, and censusing is just beginning. As the work progresses these atlasers will become experts in their own blocks, and this will add to the richness of local knowledge as well as providing standard input into the breeding bird database. As we all know, breeding begins much earlier than March for some species, and continues much later than mid-July for others, but the bulk of the censusing will take place from April through June in each of the next 5 years.

In a task this big, many volunteers are needed. Besides atlasers, we need people to search the historical records of local museums, universities, and wildlife agencies for nest and egg records and other breeding information; we need an ongoing fund-raising committee to find funds for publishing the data; and we need data entry folks. Copies of *Nests, Eggs and Nestlings*, by Colin Harrison are also needed. This very useful guide, is apparently now out of print and hard to find. We encourage any of you interested in this project to call either the GGAS office (510-843-2222) or Bob Richmond (510-537-7408) and offer your help.

—HELEN GREEN

## CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS

For the GGAS slide show of East Bay birds, the Education Committee is looking for slides of the following species:

Western Grebe in winter plumage  
in courtship display  
Double-crested Cormorant in the water  
also with wings spread  
Brown Pelican flying  
White Pelican  
Surf Scoter  
American Coot in a flock  
California Gull—adult  
Killdeer—adult  
Black-bellied Plover in breeding plumage  
Willet—flying  
standing  
a flock of small shorebirds, close up  
Mourning Dove  
Anna's Hummingbird on a nest  
Cedar Waxwing  
Bushtit  
Northern Mockingbird  
Starling—with stars  
California Quail  
Golden-crowned Sparrow  
American Robin  
Northern Flicker

When finished, the slide show will be available for use in classrooms, with garden clubs, and other organizations.

The text that accompanies the slides discusses local birding hot spots, habitat loss, and some information about each species' life history. The aims of the show are to increase people's awareness and knowledge of East Bay birds and, we hope, to gain more members for GGAS.

If we use your slide, we will acknowledge your help in the credits. Send those slides in today, or call the office.

—DAVID RICE

## **HELP SAVE MIGRATORY BIRDS**

### **Audubon Art Auction**

Nature to the avant-garde our Art Auction will benefit the Neotropical Migratory Bird program. Artists include **M. Graham Blake, Tupper Ansel Blake, Dennis Beal, Keith Hansen and Alan Hopkins**. Minimum bids will be posted with each item. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served during viewing and silent auction. There will be bird walks in the morning (9-12) and a slide show from Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 8, at the Firehouse, Fort Mason. Call 510-843-2222 for information.

—DEBEY ZITO

## **BUTTERFLY COUNT CORRECTION**

The Fourth of July Butterfly Count is not new. It began in 1974 under the auspices of the Xerces Society, modeled of course on the Audubon Christmas count. We should have known this. What is new is sponsorship of the count by Dr. Glassberg's new organization. (See the letter from Barbara Deutsch on page 69.)

## **CONSERVATION NOTES CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

The act is a target for interests hostile to "environmentalists" and subject to significant legislative threats in the current session. Please write to Senator Bill Lockyer and send a copy to your Assemblyman and Senator, urging them to resist efforts to weaken CEQA, and telling them you want the act strengthened.

Tell Senator Lockyer that many of the criticisms of CEQA are exaggerated, and that the law plays a crucial role in inventorying and reducing environmental damage from new projects. You should stress that Audubon opposes any changes to the evidentiary test which determines when an EIR should be prepared.

Possible amendments strengthening to CEQA included increased enforcement and "quality control" standards for mitigation requirements, integration of EIRs for large projects, closer scrutiny of cumulative impacts of projects and updating the CEQA Guidelines.

Send your letter to Senator Bill Lockyer, chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 2032, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

## **THE CALIFORNIA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (CESA)**

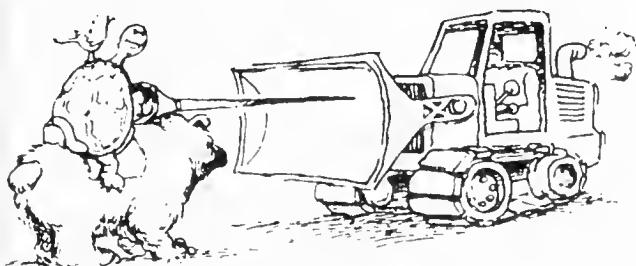
The leaders of the State Assembly and Senate need to hear from Audubon members that we support the California Endangered Species Act. Like CEQA it will be under attack in this session. Please write to Speaker Willie Brown (Room 219, State Capitol) and Senate President Pro Tempore David Roberti (Room 205, State Capitol) urging support of re-authorization of Article 4 of CESA, and to oppose any



*"The proposal to build (the Toll Road) thumps along like a car driving on four flat tires. It would fuel uncontrolled development across one of the Bay Area's last great stretches of open land."*

— San Francisco Examiner

## KEEP UP THE CRUSADE!



# GGAS BIRD SEED AND FEEDER SALE

ORDER AND PREPAY BY APRIL 22

PICK UP ON FRIDAY APRIL 30, SATURDAY, MAY 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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SEED	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
GGAS' OWN AUDUBON MIX <i>Contains only red and white millet and black oil sunflower seed.</i>	20 lbs. \$10.00	
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National Audubon Society

## AND MAIL TO:

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite G  
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This ballot must be returned to the GGAS office not later than May 15 to be counted.

## BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM—GGAS



() I pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per species  
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() I enclose my tax-deductible gift  
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GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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STAMP

weakening amendments to this section or any other section of the Act.

In relation to Article 4, remind the legislators that it only makes common sense for state agencies to consult one another on "jeopardy" determinations involving listed species. Tell Speaker Brown and Senator Roberts of the urgent need to protect California's dwindling natural diversity, and finally, let them know that Californians do not want to sacrifice a healthy environment for short term economic gain. A copy to your Assemblyman and to your Senator would be useful.

## BAND-TAILED PIGEONS, AGAIN

Another letter from our Olympia, Washington correspondent and the Friends of the BTP enclosed the 1992 report of a three-year study. It is available at the office for anyone interested.

An interesting note in the report is the description of BTP behavior as observed over the study period, and the dependence of the birds during the breeding period upon mineral springs.

An action program suggested by the organization calls on California to put a temporary moratorium on hunting BTPs, for our Fish and Game Department to develop data on average annual mortality for resident and migrant BTPs, for the development of an estimate of annual production needed to maintain a stable population, and for weekly counts and banding in key habitat areas. It also suggests that data on population developed from Christmas Count reports for the last two decades be provided to Fish and Game by the California Audubon Chapters.

The person to write to at the Dept. of Fish and Game is Daniel P. Connelly

(P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090).

The Washington State population is believed to have declined 30% over the last five years. Losses are attributed to habitat loss through logging, food loss through underbrush clearing, urbanization and herbicide spraying. This population is known to migrate to California locations and heavy losses are due to continued hunting in California. Washington and Oregon have closed seasons. The native population in California is subject to the same threats. Fish and Game needs to hear from us about the 1993 hunting season.

## BACK YARD BIRDER

It's a treat for California birders to hear the quavery wailing call of a loon. Arctic and subarctic lakes and ponds ring at all hours of the day and night during breeding—enough to drive anyone "loony." But during their winter vacations here they are quiet. Sometimes you get lucky and find one not only in breeding plumage, but yodeling as it paddles along—usually in late fall when they first arrive or early spring before leaving.

Loons are the first birds in our field guides because they are the most ancient of our birds. The earliest loon fossils date to about 65 million years ago. There were 4 species world-wide, all of which breed in North America. Recently, scientists split the slightly larger Arctic Loon from the smaller, now called the Pacific Loon. This was done after studies in Russia of breeding birds. In Britain they are called divers, an apt name since they dive deeper (240') than any birds except penguins. Unlike penguins, loons do not use their wings, using their feet only to motate while seeking aquatic invertebrates. Loons can stay submerged up to more

than a minute due to special physiology. Their legs and feet are set far back, strong for paddling but they can barely walk on land. Except for the Red-throated Loon, all loons need a rather long running start atop the water's surface for take-off. Once aloft, they are strong fliers with speeds of 60 mph or more. Their silhouette in the air is distinctive—they thrust their heads and necks forward and down which gives them the appearance of a hunchback. In flight their feet are held back, sole to sole, possibly for aerodynamics.

The loons' flamboyant courtship rituals include both aerial displays and water ballets, usually performed in unison. Their nests aren't much more than a scrape in vegetation at a marsh's edge. Both parents share the incubation of the 1-3 eggs (mostly 2). Ideally the nesting site provides for an underwater arrival and departure for the parents. A nearby nursery pool provides the chicks a place to practice finding food. The pool should be clear for spotting prey and free from marauding gulls and eagles and calmer than the rough lake waters. There has been a decline in loon populations due to pollution and to the popularity of boating. Some success has been achieved by upgrading breeding habitats with artificial nesting islands away from recreational areas.

You might see any of these four species of loons (Artic loons do not ordinarily winter here):

- The Yellow-billed Loon looks similar to the Common Loon but sports a yellow, heavy, slightly up-turned bill (may be paler in winter). It is large (30-35" long) but is more brownish than grayish. The sides of the head and neck are light and you will note a dark smudge on the side of the head.
- The Common Loon is also large (28-35" long) with a heavy bill which is whitish in winter. Just to confuse you,

it holds its head up tilted, too. But, note its forehead, which is quite steep, giving it a crested appearance.

- The Pacific Loon is 26" long and has a slim, straight bill. It holds its smoothly rounded head level. In winter its neck is white in front and gray in back. Some birds are quite dark.

- The Red-throated Loon (24-27") is pale in winter with a lovely "rice-paper" pattern on its back. It has a thin bill also, but slightly up-turned. The head is smooth and about as thick as its neck, making it look rather snake-like. (More like a cormorant, to me.)

All of these descriptions are of winter plumage.

Loons do all kinds of neat things aside from yodeling. For 2-3 weeks after hatching, the young climb on their parent's backs and are carried piggy-back—probably because their soft down becomes wet easily and the young risk exposure. Because loons can see as well underwater as above, they sort of snorkel, called "peri-scoping" where they swim along with heads underwater searching for food. When diving, they leap forward head first. They also can simply "sink," causing barely a ripple, by expelling air from their bodies. Since their weight is near that of water they just sink.

While practicing using my scope I happened to see a Common Loon preening as it floated on calm water. Suddenly it performed a series of body rolls, much like a kayaker or an otter. It seemed to be enjoying the water as if it didn't spend most of its time thereon!

I hope you have a chance to loon-watch. If you're lucky you might see its clean-cut, quite spectacular breeding plumage. And if anyone says you're crazy as a loon maybe you won't be as offended after learning more about loons.

—MEG PAULETICH

## LETTERS

San Francisco

### Re: Birdfeeding: Boon or Bane?

The article prompts me to share some observations with you.

During the past three summers I have been involved in a breeding bird atlas project in the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin of eastern Mono Co., at elevations ranging from 6 to 9 thousand feet. In the course of my census work I have paid special attention to which species frequent bird-feeders set up at summer cabins, campsites and year-round residents. I have found Brown-headed Cowbirds to be a dominant benefactor of this artificial food source at a majority of sites. Brood parasitism by cowbirds has long been recognized as having a devastating effect on songbird populations in our region. In the eastern Sierra, populations of Willow Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, and Yellow Warbler have been severely impacted by cowbird parasitism. The expansion of this species' range is widely believed to have been influenced by the introduction of grazing livestock. However, a less widely recognized factor in their population explosion is the rather recent influx of bird feeders set up in this part of California by well-intentioned people.

Birders take note: Please refrain from putting out seed during your summer visits to the Sierra and Great Basin. To do so is only serving to benefit the local cowbird population and in turn decimating already fragile local songbirds

populations. Let's do our part to educate the public about this little-mentioned problem.

PETER J. METROPULOS

P.S. I am constantly amazed by how many bird-lovers have fully-stocked feeding stations but no birdbaths in their yards. Our local birds would be better served by a dependable supply of fresh water than by handfuls of seed. All birds need to drink and bathe. The best way we can repay our feathered neighbors for the enjoyment they give us is to supply them with a bath. Birders, water your birds!

San Francisco

### Re: Butterfly Count

Please make a prominent correction of the information concerning the butterfly club's new sponsorship of the Annual Fourth of July Butterfly Count begun in 1974 under the auspices of the Xerces Society, modeled of course on the Audubon Christmas Count, and conducted and recorded yearly from then through 1992.

If Jeffrey Glassberg's letter does not make this clear, it certainly should have done so.

It would be a shame if the new sponsorship were to detract in any way from the history of these counts or from the founding purpose of the Xerces Society, to bring the full complement of diversity into the conservation effort. Perhaps someone might be able to write a short introduction to the butterfly counts held in the Bay Area, for those who have learned about them for the first time from *The GULL*.

—BARBARA DEUTSCH

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The GULL*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

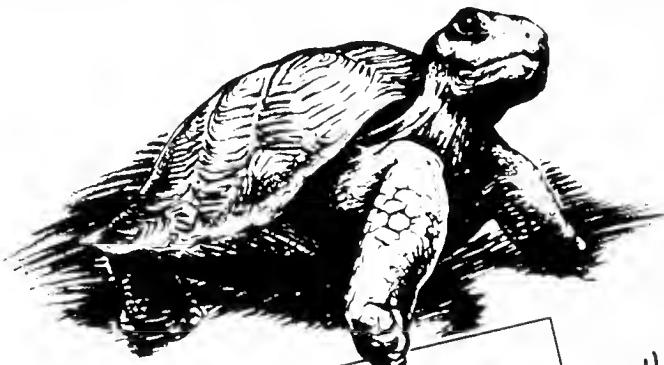
## MARK YOUR CALENDAR! SAVE MAY 8

International Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 8 will be celebrated by special field trips, and an Art Auction. Details of the field trips will be in *The GULL* for May. Save the day.

## ELECTION: NATIONAL BOARD

In April, at its regular meeting, the GGAS board of directors is to vote in the election for the regional member of National Audubon's board of directors. George Ellman of Madrone Audubon Society, currently an incumbent, is running unopposed for the position.

## We can use our Tax Returns to help Endangered Species.



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Use "Line 50"! California has more than 284 native animal and plant species that are fighting for survival. We urge you to help them win that fight with a tax-deductable contribution on "Line 50" of your State Tax Return. Please help if you can. Even a little contribution helps a lot!

*Pictured here: Desert Tortoise (one of 284 California species at risk!)*

## "SAVING MAN'S WILDLIFE HERITAGE"

Last week Virgil Bolin of Artline Printing, whose press has been producing *The GULL* since 1984 has presented us with a copy of *The National Geographic Magazine* for November 1954. Its lead article of the above title celebrated national Audubon's half century, written by John H. Baker, then president of the Society and with Robert F. Sisson's photographs. It is a reminder that the end of the Audubon century is not that far off. The magazine is now shelved with other historical material in our library.

### An excerpt:

We are not alarmists. We are optimists. We have faith in the resourcefulness of mankind, even though preferential interest never lays down its sword. Various groups clamor constantly for killing control over whatever they consider to be their enemies. People, for example, preferentially interested in worms may hate robins. Those preferentially interested in deer hate mountain lions. Those preferentially interested in grass hate deer.

We hope to convince people that most desires for killing control are based on an erroneous assumption. For example, when our society employed men to protect the bird rookery keys in Tampa Bay, Florida, local fishermen feared any resultant increase in pelicans and other fish-eating birds would decrease fish. The stock of fish, as well as birds, was already decidedly low.

But when the birds were restored to their former abundance, so were the fish. The aquatic plant life, pasturage

of the sea, was restored to its normal profusion and verdure by the guano of water birds. The plant life, in turn, provided food, shelter and shade for fish and other marine animals.

One year one of the society's wardens wanted to exercise killing control on Great-tailed Grackles. Among other things, they sometimes feed on egret's eggs and young. We did not permit him to kill the grackles, however, and the crop of young egrets raised to maturity that season was the greatest on record in that sanctuary.

The numbers of prey and predators go up and down together, granted a little time lag in the coordination.

The Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries ran an interesting experiment at its Hog Island waterfowl refuge. Here careful records were kept of a year's wheat crop in three fields with almost identical soil and commercial fertilization. Some 2,000 wintering Canada Geese fed regularly in one of the fields, a smaller number in the second and none in the third. The yield that year—thanks to the guano of the birds—proved to be 33 bushels to the acre in the field used by the 2,000 geese, 25 bushels in the field used by the few geese, and only 18 bushels in the one not used by the geese at all.

\* \* \* \* \*

One hears a great deal nowadays about "management," "harvesting" and cropping the surpluses" of wildlife. To this our answer is: It hasn't been necessary to harvest or "crop the surplus" of songbirds. Eventually, it seems to us, we must conclude that it is not so much wildlife that requires management as it is man.

---

CONTRIBUTORS

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GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY THANKS THE GENEROUS DONORS who responded to our January letter. The funds received will be judiciously expended to advance the efforts indicated in the letter.

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## NEWS FROM OUR RANCH

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 Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970  
 Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature Education  
 under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin  
 and Sequoia Audubon Societies

Gary Holloway, President

**GOLDEN GATE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE AUDUBON CANYON RANCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Steven Margolin, ex officio  
 Nicki Spillane

Dan Murphy  
 Bruce Welker

### THE PUBLIC SEASON— WE'RE OPEN

What more can be said until July 19 when we're closed to the public. But April is your chance to see the Ranch in a peak year. Who knows what will happen with the birds.

Eggs will be in the nests and the first young will be hatching. Songbirds will be on territory, shorebird and duck migration will be underway, and wildflowers can be expected to be fabulous after our drought busting year. Visit the Ranch now and again later in the season as spring fades to summer and the herons and egrets begin to fledge.

### THE CLERIN ZUMWALT CIRCLE

The Board of Directors of ACR is very pleased to announce the creation of the clerin Zumwalt Circle in our Grove of Honor. It furthers our recognition of our very generous donors by acknowledging those who have included ACR in their wills and charitable trusts. If you have planned a gift to the Ranch in your estate, but you have not let us know about it, please consider doing so. Anonymous gifts are always welcome and recognition for such gifts are treated according to the donor's preference. If you have been meaning to revise or complete your will or trust, please consider a gift to ACR. If you have questions regarding planned gifts to ACR, please call us at (415) 868-9244.

## NEW BLP DOCENTS AND RANCH GUIDES

It was a year ago when we first announced our plans for a new docent training class at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve, and now 31 new docents have graduated with the docent class of '93. They and many others are volunteering their time, expertise and love to work with our 4th and 5th grade visitors from around the Bay Area. Twenty-four new Ranch Guides have completed training and have joined the ranks of those weekend docents who help with our interpretation program each weekend of the public season. The members of the ACR family welcome our new volunteers, and we wish them success, enjoyment and fulfillment in their work with children and the general public.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Once again we can use your help with our ongoing Harbor Seal Project at Tomales Bay. The seals will be pupping soon and people will be out disturbing them. We need volunteers to document seal reproductive success and to assess the impacts of human disturbance on these sea mammals. We need volunteers to participate in our public outreach program. If you can help with either, please call Mary Ellen King at (707) 537-1546.

We will continue to need hosts each and every weekend and holiday during our public season, from now until July 18. If you want to spend a day at the ranch and join our family of volunteers, here is your chance. All you have to do is greet visitors, direct them to the overlook, or answer a few questions. You will probably get enough time off to hike a trail and enjoy a bit of the Ranch yourself. One thing you'll get for certain is the satisfaction of helping others discover the Ranch. Volunteers should expect to arrive at the Ranch at around 9:45 and stay until 4:30. Sign-

up through GGAS. The chapter schedule includes all May weekends except Memorial Day, May 31.

### **SPRING CALENDAR**

Pre registration is required for all ACR activities. For events at Cypress Grove and Bolinas Lagoon Preserves please call (415) 868-9244. For Bouverie Audubon Preserve events please call (707) 938-4554.

**"Nature at Night"** at the Bouverie Preserve on April 2, with Cathleen Cannon (\$10). Let our crickets, frogs and owls brighten your night as you explore the world of shadow and sound in our lovely Bouverie Preserve.

**"Spring Wildflowers"** at both the Bolinas Lagoon and Bouverie Preserves on April 3 and 4, with Ray Peterson and John Petersen (\$40). Overnight lodging is available in Volunteer Canyon for an additional \$5. This is sure to be a fantastic wildflower year so take advantage of this information packed field class to increase your wildflower identification skills.

**"Introduction to the Taxonomy & Ecology of Coastal Prairie Grasses"** at the Cypress Grove Preserve on May 15, with John Kelly (\$20). Here's your chance to learn to identify some of the plants we see most and no doubt ignore the most. Look at flowering native grasses, learn about their role in the coastal ecosystem and use taxonomic keys and microscopes to identify them.

**"Heron & Egret Photography"** at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve on May 15 with Philip Loring Greene (\$35). Here's a one day program with one of America's leading wildlife photographers. You'll learn to photograph those gorgeous herons and egrets which bring us back to the Ranch from year to year.

**"9th Annual Downhill Hike"** at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve on May 22, with Ray Peterson (\$10). Ray's been going downhill for 9 years now. You

just have to be there to understand how he does it.

**"ACR's Ponds—with the Researchers"** at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve on June 4 & 5 with Ray Peterson and Tom Brandner (\$20). Here's an event which starts the right way, with a potluck dinner. After dinner you'll learn how to set light traps and identify some of the organisms you'll retrieve the following morning. It sounds like this is a two-meal event since it doesn't end until about 11 a.m. on Saturday. Sounds good to me!

**"Butterfly Counts"** in Marin County on June 26, in Sonoma County on June 27, and get-to-know-the-critters night on June 23 with Ray Peterson (\$5). So you get to learn how to identify butterflies and count them for five bucks! If you feel guilty just bring a friend along and send a check for ten bucks. As an extra added attraction Ray promises to turn you into "a swaggering butterfly taxonomist," so he forewarned.

**"Local Ecology and Natural History"** at Bolinas, Cypress Grove and Bouverie Sanctuaries during the week of July 19-23 with John Kelly, John Petersen and Ray Peterson (\$195). This is the widely acclaimed annual program for teachers which will help you make natural history an integral part of your science program. The fee includes 3 semester units.

### **BOUVERIE GUIDED NATURE WALKS**

Join a docent led walk thorough the Bouverie Audubon Preserve in Sonoma. Spectacular wildflowers and singing birds will enhance the beauty of the preserve. Dates are Saturdays: April 3 & 17, May 1 & 15. All walks begin at 9:30 a.m. and end around 1:30 p.m.

Reservations for these free walks are required, so call early. (707) 938-4554.

—DAN MURPHY

## ONE GOOD TERN, ETC.

Saturday, April 17, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hayward Regional Shoreline, a day-long workshop: to make decoys of the Least Tern. After a brief introduction to the bird (naturalist Katie Colbert) and a short demonstration of techniques (wood-carver Sherilyn Tharp), participants will size and shape wooden decoy blanks using rasps and files. Then the decoys will be primed. After a lunch break, the decoys will be painted. At day's end instructors will snap family portraits of participants and their decoys, before sending the brand new "birds" off to their future home at the Shoreline. The purpose is to lure Least Terns to new, safe habitat.

Families welcome! (Kids age ten and up.) Bring a bag lunch and help save a species. This program is offered in conjunction with the Piedmont Adult School (Alameda Co.) and reservations are required. Fee: \$20, adult; \$12, under 18 years (payable to Piedmont

Adult School). For reservations and directions only, please call (510) 420-3656. For program questions only, please call (510) 862-2244.

## MAY WE UPGRADE TO YOUR OLD COMPUTER?

Our appeal for a computer in *The GULL* for February was successful, and brought us a 286 SX 25 and a Hewlett-Packard Laser Printer. Both have been put to good use, and we thank the donor.

We find we could use a second, this time, a 386 SX 25 or better would answer a need in our office. If you or your company have something we could put to use, please call the GGAS office (510) 843-2222. Gifts to GGAS are tax deductible to the full extent provided by law.

## VOLUNTEERS IN THE OFFICE

Our calls for help in the office have also been answered, and every day except Tuesday is covered. Inquiries about helping are welcome. Can you come in for a few hours, once a week?

## GIFTS and BEQUESTS

### FOR GGAS

### FOR GGAS

In Memory of  
Herbert Boese

### FOR THE RARE BIRD ALERT

In Memory of  
Mrs. Lynn (Louise) Waldorf

### Gift of

Mary Kelly

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

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## THE GULL

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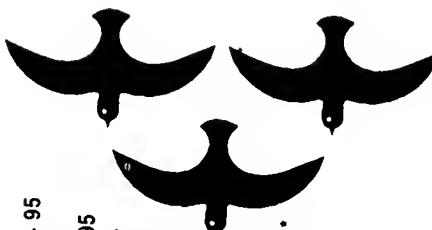
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